

U.S. Police Arrest 71 Protesters in Cleveland



Cleveland, May 25 (RHC)-- Police in the U.S. city of Cleveland say scores of protesters have been arrested following the acquittal of a white police officer in the 2012 shooting deaths of two unarmed African Americans.

Police said on Sunday that at least 71 people were arrested late on Saturday during protests in Cleveland, Ohio, that flared after a judge ruled that the decision to use deadly force by Officer Michael Brelo, 31, was reasonably justifiable in the deaths of 43-year-old Timothy Russell and 30-year-old Malissa Williams in November 2012.

Thirteen officers fired a total of 137 times at the couple's car after a high-speed chase, but only Brelo was charged because prosecutors said he fired 15 rounds even when the vehicle had stopped and the occupants were no longer a threat.

Cleveland Police Chief Calvin Williams said demonstrations remained mostly peaceful after the judge announced the verdict on Saturday, but later in the day, some people became aggressive, who assaulted bystanders in a downtown area, blocked a major highway and disrupted business at a shopping center.

Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson said on Sunday morning that demonstrators "served as an example of peaceful demonstration and dialogue that will help us move forward." Jackson said: "We will and we

continue to encourage peaceful protest and demonstration, however we will not tolerate activities that cross the line."

The killings of several unarmed Black men by white police officers in recent months, and decisions by grand juries not to indict the officers, have sparked a national debate on race and led to mass street protests all over the United States.

Large-scale demonstrations were held across the U.S. after a series of high-profile incidents of white police officers killing unarmed African-American men, including Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri; Tamir Rice in Cleveland, Ohio; Eric Garner in Staten Island, New York and Walter Scott in North Charleston, South Carolina.

The recent unrest in Baltimore over the death of Gray was the most violent in the United States since the protests in Ferguson following the fatal shooting of 18-year-old Brown by a white police officer.

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